

A Learning and Teaching Resource

Introduction

Cape Breton Island is known for its rich heritage and diverse cultures. Dating back to the early days of settlement in the 17th century, European settlers – predominantly French and British at that time – arrived in Cape Breton in search of new opportunities. For the next three centuries, immigration patterns increased steadily, building a community of cultures that to this day still prides itself on diversity and understanding of others.

In the late 1800's and continuing into the first part of the twentieth century, people of Eastern and Central European descent ventured across the Atlantic to settle in Cape Breton, where work in the coal and steel industries was flourishing. Opportunities were plentiful, and despite adverse living and working conditions, they began to carve out a new life, usually never returning to their native lands. Most often, they settled in small communities, surrounded by others of their own culture, and preserved traditions and a way of life that they had experienced in their homeland.

In industrial Cape Breton, they settled in Whitney Pier, a community of Sydney, as well as the towns and villages of North Sydney, Sydney Mines, New Waterford, Dominion, Glace Bay and Donkin. They settled and survived by building on their rich cultural traditions of music, dance and faith to create community spirit and endure hardships that far surpassed what they had left in their homelands. Many of these communities of culture still survive today although the industries have all disappeared. Each culture lives through the descendants of the early immigrants, and the sense of pride remains as strong as it was more than one hundred years ago.

This web portal – *diversitycapebreton.ca* – tells the stories of four of these cultural groups: Croatian, Jewish, Polish and Ukrainian. Through digital archives, their stories, songs, and other artifacts are preserved for us to learn about the past and to celebrate our rich diversity. This *Learning and Teaching Resource* is intended for teachers and students to explore and understand the rich heritage of this part of Atlantic Canada. It is rooted in the current Nova Scotia curricula as well as Foundation Documents of CAMET (Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training).

For students, *diversitycapebreton.ca* provides support for learning in many content areas, including Social Studies, Language Arts, and Arts Education. This resource describes three xx-hour modules containing suggestions for learning and teaching at various levels:

- Grade 3 – 5: *Immigrating to Cape Breton Island*
- Grade 6 – 8: *Life in a New Land*
- Grade 9 – 12: *Immigration Past, Present and Future*

In each module, curriculum outcomes are identified, additional resources are referenced, and suggestions for assessment are presented. Using an inquiry-based learning approach, students will discover and explore the objects presented for each cultural group, and will make direct application to topics covered in other disciplines.

Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Social Studies Curriculum (1999) states:

...social studies, more than any other curriculum area, is vital to developing citizenship...The social studies curriculum promotes students' growth as individuals and as citizens of Canada and of an increasingly interdependent world. It provides opportunities for students to explore multiple approaches that may be used to analyse and interpret their own world and the world of others... The knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed through the social studies curriculum empower students to be informed, responsible citizens of Canada and the world and, through participation in the democratic process, improve society. (p. 1)

While the modules provide a multidisciplinary approach through which students examine issues that affect their lives, it is primarily through social studies and the arts that they see the life and times of cultural groups who immigrated to Cape Breton in the early 1900s.

The modules have been developed according to specific grade levels: elementary, middle and high school. However, it is suggested that teachers read through all three to get a sense of the scope of what is possible in the classroom. This may encourage some to take a module from a different grade level and make adaptations to suit the age of the students. In other words, the module becomes a starting point for further inquiry that leads to deeper meaning on a particular topic. Expectations and desired outcomes will vary in this case, and additional classroom resources to support the learning may be different depending on the grade level.

Each module is intended to be approximately 10 hours in length, but this does not limit the teacher in extending the learning beyond the suggested times. Teachers should feel free to branch out into other areas of curriculum, and thus identify Essential Learning Outcomes or Specific Curriculum Outcomes according to the discipline that is integrated.

Above all, it is important that students experience the joy that comes with working through an integrated unit, making connections to other disciplines, taking

ownership for their own work, and seeing life through personal and authentic learning simulations.

For each of the three modules that follow, students will discover and learn about the rich cultural traditions of the Central and Eastern European immigrants who settled in Whitney Pier. Because this is a living repository for archival materials, suggestions for learning, teaching and assessment to support the Croatian, Jewish, Polish, and Ukrainian cultures will be added as they are developed over time. In the meantime, many of the activities suggested can be applied to the other cultural groups with ease and minimal adjustment.

Module 3: Immigration Past, Present and Future

Grades 9 – 12

Background

Project-based learning is a dynamic approach to teaching in which students explore real world problems and challenges. With this type of active and engaging learning, students are inspired to obtain a deeper level of knowledge of the subjects they are studying. [www.edutopia.org/project-based-learning]

Project-based learning is a more effective way to teach because it results in demonstrations of performance that result from specific problems that students solve. It is a hands-on approach where students demonstrate what they have learned in a real-life context, building on critical thinking, collaboration and communication skills. Studies have proven that students who are exposed to project-based learning report higher incidences of motivation and engagement.

This module is designed to integrate many curricular areas of the Grades 9 – 12 Program of Studies. In particular, it will explore a unique project integrating Social Studies, English Language Arts, Drama, Visual Arts, Music, Media Arts, and Technology Education. It is suggested that teachers devote 10 in-class hours to this module, realizing that this could be extended or adapted to suit particular needs. Above all, sufficient time must be dedicated to the module so that students are led through a series of meaningful activities that bring together a product that is celebration for the entire class.

Throughout this module, teachers will discover possibilities for students to engage with many resources contained on the Web site, diversitycapebreton.ca, an archival collection of photographs, interviews, videos, and other artifacts from the Ukrainian community in Whitney Pier, Cape Breton. These items are physically housed in three different locations in Cape Breton: Beaton Institute, Whitney Pier Museum, Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church, and in private collections. Through the use of technology, they are now accessible online as a digital collection on the World Wide Web.

In addition, students will work as a team to develop skills through questions, inquiry and critical thinking. They will develop solutions to real-life problems, and actively engage in a learning process that blurs the lines between disciplines and subject specialities. The focus of the module will be the creation of a theatre piece that depicts a time, place and community as identified in the collection of Katharine McLennan.

Module Design

This module is intended to support the Social Studies, Language Arts and Arts Education curricula. It is designed as a ten-hour unit that will lead students through a series of activities to develop in them an understanding of the importance of cultural collections, their interpretation, and the stories they tell. It develops into a culminating class project in which students will experience the joy of presenting a creative product resulting from project-based learning. This could become an excellent project for the annual Heritage Fair

As teacher, it is important to use your imagination to create a learning environment that supports inquiry-based learning, and to allow the students to make decisions and guide the projects from start to finish. As teacher, you act as a facilitator of the learning by ensuring that students are focused and experiencing success in achieving the outcomes. The joy of learning comes through discovering and exploration.

Curriculum Outcomes

Through the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET), foundation documents in Social Studies, English Language Arts and Arts Education have been created to guide curriculum development in the Atlantic Provinces. General Curriculum Outcomes (GCOs) are general statements of the things that students should know and be able to do upon graduation, and through a building process, they achieve these outcomes through sequential learning experiences from K to 12. From the GCOs, Key-Stage and Specific Curriculum Outcomes fall, and these are identified in the curriculum for each of the disciplines highlighted. In this module, the suggestions for learning and teaching touch upon the following General Curriculum Outcomes:

Social Studies

GCO: Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the interdependent relationship among individuals, societies, and the environment – locally, nationally, and globally – and the implications for a sustainable future.

GCO: Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the interactions among peoples, places and the environment.

GCO: Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the past and how it affects the present and the future.

English Language Arts

GCO: Students will speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences.

GCO: Students will be able to communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically.

GCO: Students will be able to interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience and purpose.

GCO: Students will be able to select, read and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts.

GCO: Students will be able to interpret, select and combine information, using a variety of strategies, resources and technologies.

GCO: Students will be able to respond personally to a range of texts.

GCO: Students will be able to create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes.

Arts Education

GCO: Students will be expected to explore, challenge, and express ideas, using the skills, language, techniques, and processes of the arts.

GCO: Students will be expected to create and/or present, collaborative and independently, expressive products in the arts for a range of audiences and purposes.

GCO: Students will be expected to demonstrate critical awareness of and value for the role of the arts in creating and reflecting culture.

GCO: Students will be expected to respect the contributions to the arts of individuals and cultural groups in local and global contexts, and value the arts as a record of human experience.

GCO: Students will be expected to examine the relationship among the arts, societies, and environments.

GCO: Students will be expected to apply critical thinking and problem-solving strategies to reflect on and respond to their own and others' expressive works.

GCO: Students will be expected to understand the role of technologies in creating and responding to expressive works.

GCO: Students will be expected to analyse the relationship between artistic intent and the expressive work.

Suggestions for Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Lesson 1

Introduce the class to the web portal, *diversitycapebreton.ca*. First, give them the background on the Ukrainian immigrants in Cape Breton in the twentieth century, and explain the contributions they made to life in Whitney Pier, a neighbourhood in Sydney, and Glace Bay and neighbourhoods surrounding the town. Explain that the Ukrainians were one of several cultural groups that settled this region of Canada, immigrating in search of work and a new life. Croatian, Jewish, Polish, Russian, Italian, Hungarian, Greek, Caribbean immigrants made this part of the world a living “United Nations”, working and socializing together as they established a life in a new land far from family and friends who they left behind in the “old country”.

Show the students the opening page of the web portal and demonstrate how to navigate the site using the various tabs. In particular, click on the following tabs: Collections, Interactive Resources, and Links.

For the remainder of the lesson, allow the students time to explore the collections under each of the tabs. Before they begin, highlight the fact that the entries contained on this site are interviews, videos and objects from the collections housed in the Beaton Institute (CBU), the Whitney Pier Museum, Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church, and private collections. For this activity, depending on the availability of technology, you may want to group the students so there are sufficient computers for everyone or every group in the class.

Individual or Group Assessment

Depending on whether students are working individually or in groups, determine if this assessment should be done alone or with their group-mates. Ask them to locate specific information that will help them in the remainder of the module as they deepen their understanding of Central and Eastern European immigration to the East Coast of Canada. For example, you may wish to design a worksheet that will assist them in documenting information that they discover (e.g., object, brief description, location on the web portal). Alternatively, you may wish to design a questionnaire (much like a treasure hunt) that allows students to focus their attention on various aspects of immigration. This will be used to guide the students in their research throughout this module. Sample questions might be:

- What main themes keep emerging as you explore the collections on the web portal?
- What particular objects or interviews indicate the challenges of immigrating to this part of the world?
- How did Ukrainian immigrants maintain their own identity?

- What specific traditions have been passed down from generation to generation?
- How has the Ukrainian population changed from the early 1990s to present day?
- What role did the church play in the lives of the Ukrainians of Whitney Pier?
- How was language preserved in younger generations?
- List three things that surprised you as you did your exploration? Why did these resonate with you?
- List three questions that emerged for you as you did your exploration.

Lesson 2

In small groups, have the students listen to the first 10 minutes of the interview with Mrs. D. Fedarowych. This can be found by clicking on the following tabs:

- ❖ Interactive Resources (found on the home page)
 - Holdings of the Beaton Institute
 - Eastern and Central European Holdings – Ukrainian
 - Interview with Mrs. Fedarowych (page 2)

This excerpt from the interview tells of Mrs. Fedarowych's experiences of coming to Canada. After they have listened to this excerpt, have them discuss the information she presents. Remind them that much has been written of the larger Ukrainian communities in central and western Canada, but little has been written to date to record the stories of those who settled in Cape Breton. Have each group share key points that they discussed.

Next, have them listen to the first 10-11 minutes of the interview with John Huk.

- ❖ Interactive Resources (found on the home page)
 - Holdings of the Beaton Institute
 - Eastern and Central European Holdings – Ukrainian
 - Ukrainian Culture in Sydney (page 3)

In this excerpt, Mr. Huk discusses his life as a third generation Ukrainian growing up in Whitney Pier and how he is working hard to preserve Ukrainian traditions with his children and grand children. In particular, he talks about identity, and explains that through the preservation of culture, we develop a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and global awareness.

In their groups, have the students discuss the key points from this interview. Are they similar to those in Mrs. Fedarowych's interview? What are the similarities and differences in the perspectives of both?

Individual Assessment

Have the students explore their ethnic own origins. Can they trace their roots back to a specific cultural group who moved to this area for a particular reason? If possible, have them interview a relative for more information on knowledge and traditions that have been passed down through the generations.

Lesson 3

Tips for Teaching Success

For some families, immigration is a very sensitive issue, and talking about it may elicit deep-rooted emotions. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of this and not force anyone to share their story with the whole class until they are ready.

Begin the lesson by having students share what they discovered about their cultural origins.

Have the students do an Internet search of immigration to Canada during the twentieth century. This can be done as an individual activity, or depending on the students and the availability of technology in the classroom, they can work in pairs or small groups. To narrow their focus, provide some key questions/ideas such as:

- Opening up the western provinces
- Cultural groups in settlements across Canada
- Government incentives for workers to settle in Canada
- Pier 21 records
- Immigration to Canada following World War I and II

Allow sufficient time for this activity and then have a class discussion about their findings. In particular, focus on how Canada was settled in those years, and how the reasons for coming to Canada may have changed.

On-going Assessment

For a culminating project, students will be asked to do a research project on immigration to Canada, and present it in a formal setting, such as the annual Heritage Fair, mini conference, parent-teacher meeting, etc. The research done in the first three lessons of this module should give the students a general idea of where their interests lie, and students should be encouraged to select a topic of personal interest. The final product should be a creative endeavour rather than a traditional paper. Examples might include a work of art; a musical composition; a dance; a monologue, play or story; a power point presentation; a web portal. It may be a personal account of immigration to Canada if anyone in the class has

experienced that, or it could be a family history of immigrating from a foreign land. This can be an individual or small group project. Topics will need to be approved in advance, and individual conferences with the teacher will be scheduled throughout the module to assess the progress.

Lesson 4 and 5

As teacher, find someone in the community who has immigrated to Canada and invite him/her to class to tell the students their story. In many communities, these people can be found working as professionals – medical practitioners, university professors, entrepreneurs, etc. In advance of the visit, have the students as a class compile questions that they will ask so as to make the most of the limited time available. These questions should show some depth of understanding from the research they have done to date, including research on the country from where the visitor comes.

Have the students do a survey of the school population to ascertain if there are immigrant students in their school. If there are, invite them to the class to tell of their experiences before coming to Canada and after arriving. This will give the class the perspective of a young person, and it should lead to a better understanding of cultural diversity in the school and community.

On-going Assessment

As a class, create a rubric for the final project. Consider ideas such as: authentic sources of information, integration of interviews, a range of data, objects and artifacts, archival records, direct links to the diversitycapebreton.ca web portal where possible (ie, comparisons to the stories of the Central and Eastern Europeans in Cape Breton).

Schedule individual conferences with students to approve their research topic, provide feedback, and develop a timeline with them.